California State Library
Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help
Vendors, 2007/08

	Tutor.com Live Homework Help	Brainfuse HelpNow
Hours of operation	11AM-10PM PST (maximum)	1PM-10PM PST. Alternate schedules available upon request.
Technical requirements to access service	Internet access using any available connection, including 54K dial-up modem. Browsers/operating systems: Firefox/Window 2000, Window XP, Window Vista, Mac OS X; IE/Window 2000, Window XP, Window Vista. Adobe Flash	Windows: Windows 95 or above; 64 megabytes (MB) of RAM; at least 27 MB of free disk space; active Internet connection 28.8 Kb/s (dial-up accessible). Mac: Mac OS X and above; 64 megabytes (MB) of RAM; at least 7MB of free disk space; active Internet connection 28.8 Kb/s (dial-up accessible).
Technical support to libraries	Communication via email within 24 hours. Client Services Manager for quick answers and personalized assistance. Tech support is available by phone 9AM-5PM EST.	Full support available via phone and email. Onsite visits when necessary.
Technical support to users	Support offered through Helpdesk via live chat and email.	Live support via toll-free number, 7AM-10PM PST. Email inquiries addressed within 24 hours.
Access by schools and other agencies through public schools	Yes, via the library's website.	Yes, upon advance arrangement with the contracting library.
Whiteboard use	Up to 10 whiteboards can be opened by the tutor. All whiteboards are printed at the end of session.	One whiteboard per session that expands as necessary. Whiteboard screen can be printed.
Website sharing	Tutors and students view and mark-up websites together. Tutors have easy access to pre-screened websites.	Tutors and students can view and mark-up websites together. Tutors have easy access to pre-screened websites.
Downloading and sharing files	Files may be downloaded using a secure file-sharing feature and may be shared and marked-up by both tutor and student.	Files may be downloaded using a secure file-sharing feature and may be shared and marked-up by both tutor and student.
Voice communication	Not allowed.	Standard service does not use voice communication, but this service is available upon request by the contracting library.
24-hour writing lab	Writing Center offers live writing assistance.	Yes, students may use file-sharing feature to submit written work that will be reviewed within 24 hours. Constructive comments are interspersed throughout and summary comments provided at the end. Live writing assistance is also offered in real-time during tutoring session.
Skills-building modules separate from homework help	Skills-building occurs during each tutoring session. Practice worksheets available.	Yes, it is designed for students who have academic needs that extend beyond homework help. The skills-building module involves one-on-one sessions with live tutors who utilize a series of field-tested lessons.

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Homework help subject areas	English, Writing Center, Social Studies, Science, Earth science, Biology, Chemistry, Physic, Math, Algebra 1 and 2, Geometry, Trigonometry, Calculus	Math, English, Essay writing, Social studies, Science, Algebra 1 and 2, Earth science, Geometry, Trigonometry, Calculus, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Reading comprehension/grammar/vocabulary
School grades served	K-12. College Intro. Adult learners.	K-12. Adult learners are welcome.
Languages offered	English and Spanish	English and Spanish
Tutor certification process	Online application. Subject area test(s). Submit writing sample. Online proficiency test/simulated session test. Probation for 30 days. Certified once probation is passed.	Resume review. Interview. Online proficiency test/simulated session test. Fingerprint/background check. Ongoing professional development.
Tutor background check process	Social security trace. Name and address history report. National sex offender search. County criminal history report for past 7 years. Education verification.	Same process mandated by California school districts. Fingerprinted and checked through FBI and local jurisdiction criminal databases. References and previous employers contacted.
Percentage of tutors based in North America	95%. 5% in Central & South America augment U.S. bi-lingual tutors.	100%, including bilingual tutors.
Monitoring and evaluation of tutor's work	100% of sessions are reviewed. Every tutor has a mentor who reviews sessions and provides feedback. Provider Management Team also review sessions. Tutors who excel are rewarded with increased compensation and recognition.	Live monitoring by a full-time monitoring team. Session transcripts are reviewed on a daily basis. Tutors are rated on a scale of 1-5. Routing preference is given to tutors with higher rating.
Process for catching rude behavior during tutoring sessions	Sessions are filtered for objectionable language. All filtered sessions are reviewed by mentors and management staff within 24 hours. When Students persist in rude behavior the session is ended. Profanity is grounds for immediate termination of the session.	Live monitors as well as daily review of session transcripts. Tutors are trained to ignore rude behavior, stay on-task and not display anger or frustration. Students who persist in rude behavior are politely let go.
Tutors working with more than one student at a time	Tutors never work with more than one student at a time.	Exclusively one-to-one tutoring. If overflow occurs, certain tutors are tasked with immediately greeting students and placing them in a private classroom, where they are invited to draw or type their question while waiting for the next available tutor.
Ratio between public library and private customers	95% of customers come from libraries; 5% have private accounts.	Serve public library customers exclusively.
Length of sessions	Session length varies. Sessions end when brought to a sound educational conclusion. 22-23 min. average.	No restrictions on session length. Tutors are trained to not limit sessions by rushing the student or ending a session prematurely.
Student access to transcripts	Students may print transcript, including whiteboard(s). URLs and file names are automatically included.	Students may cut-and-paste transcript or print screen shot that includes whiteboard display. Users may also use session player to record and play back entire session.
Measuring user satisfaction	Students complete exit surveys.	Students complete exit surveys.

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Measuring individual student progress	Library sessions are anonymous. Individuals are not tracked.	Students may take state-aligned online assessments that can be used to track progress.
Promotional materials	Customized, color program cards and posters are provided for free. Libraries receive a "getting started guide," launch support, training, best practices for successful promotional efforts. Templates for promotional items, PR, School communications, and PowerPoints are also provided on a Client Resource Center website.	Posters, bookmarks, cards, banners, etc., are provided free of charge. Will also work with libraries to customize materials.
Usage reports	Reports are emailed on the 3rd of the month. See usage by subject and grade level, user survey results and comments, all by branch-remote or in-library. Zip code and custom available.	Provided monthly and includes usage by branch, remote usage breakdown, usage by subject and grade level, user survey results, and average number of sessions per hour and day of the week. Additional data are available upon request.
Other customer service support	Client Resource Center website has training sign up. Quarterly Live Homework Help newsletter has marketing tips. Partnership with JanWay for customized student giveaways. Marketing webinars. Marketing audit to help increase usage. Identify and support funding opportunities.	Brainfuse staff are available for live presentations to schools and community groups. Assist libraries find additional funding as necessary.
Pricing model	Standard pricing for California State Library project is 14 cents per capita.	Pricing is generally based on population served and, when applicable, prior usage.
Subscription model	Yearly and multi-year contracts.	Year-to-year, multi-year and lock-in rate contracts are available.
Billing	Invoice is sent after contract is signed and returned.	Handled to work within the timeframe of the client's budget cycle.
Library staff training	Training is either in-person or via online webinar, including tour of Client Resource Center website, using PR templates, school outreach. Ongoing Marketing training is provided.	Onsite training includes service overview, a review of frequently asked questions, a walk-through of how to help students use the service, and how to obtain customer service support. Provide libraries with interactive software for easy reproduction of training.